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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal Spirit, the fountain of light and truth, we rise and stand because of Your mercies. You make our plans succeed.

Today, shine the light of Your presence upon our Senators. As they wrestle with complexity, show them the way. Lord, give them the wisdom You have promised to all who will simply request it. Remind them of Your mission to bring deliverance to captives and liberty to the bruised. May our lawmakers focus on pleasing You and not on political consequences. Give them contrite and humble spirits. Teach them new and creative ways to cooperate with each other for the common good.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mrs. MURRAY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, February 9, 2023.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, a Senator from the State of Georgia, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATTY MURRAY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WARNOCK thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of DeAndrea Gist Benjamin, of South Carolina, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, 13 percent of the American people believe the state of our Union is strong—13 percent. Just 16 percent say they are

better off financially today than they were 2 years ago. But on Tuesday night, it took President Biden the most words in the history of the State of the Union to declare that everything is actually going swimmingly and he doesn't plan to change a thing.

To working families, who have been crushed by historic inflation because of his policies, President Biden offered to cut a few dollars off the fees of concert tickets and hotel stays they can't afford anyway. To Americans who are worried that he just let a Chinese spy balloon surveil our country from coast to coast, the President described his slow and unsteady reaction as a big success. To a country that is already teetering on the brink of recession because of him, President Biden proposed even more gigantic new tax hikes. To the American people who are frightened and curious about surging violent crime, President Biden took aim at the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens and implied that taxpayers need to pay for even more welfare spending before we can expect people not to commit murder.

The President paid lip service to the obscene quantities of foreign fentanyl that flow across our open borders and kill our people, but his main border proposal was to dangle the prospect of amnesty for people who come here illegally.

He repeated his broken promise not to sign tax hikes that hit the middle class when he has already hiked taxes on American jobs and American energy.

The country got to hear a lecture about treating political opponents with respect from the President who lied about State voting laws and compared half the country to Bull Connor and Jefferson Davis and a lecture about our democratic institutions from the President who endorsed permanently breaking the Senate so that his party could grab more power.

President Biden expressed not one ounce of contrition or accountability

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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